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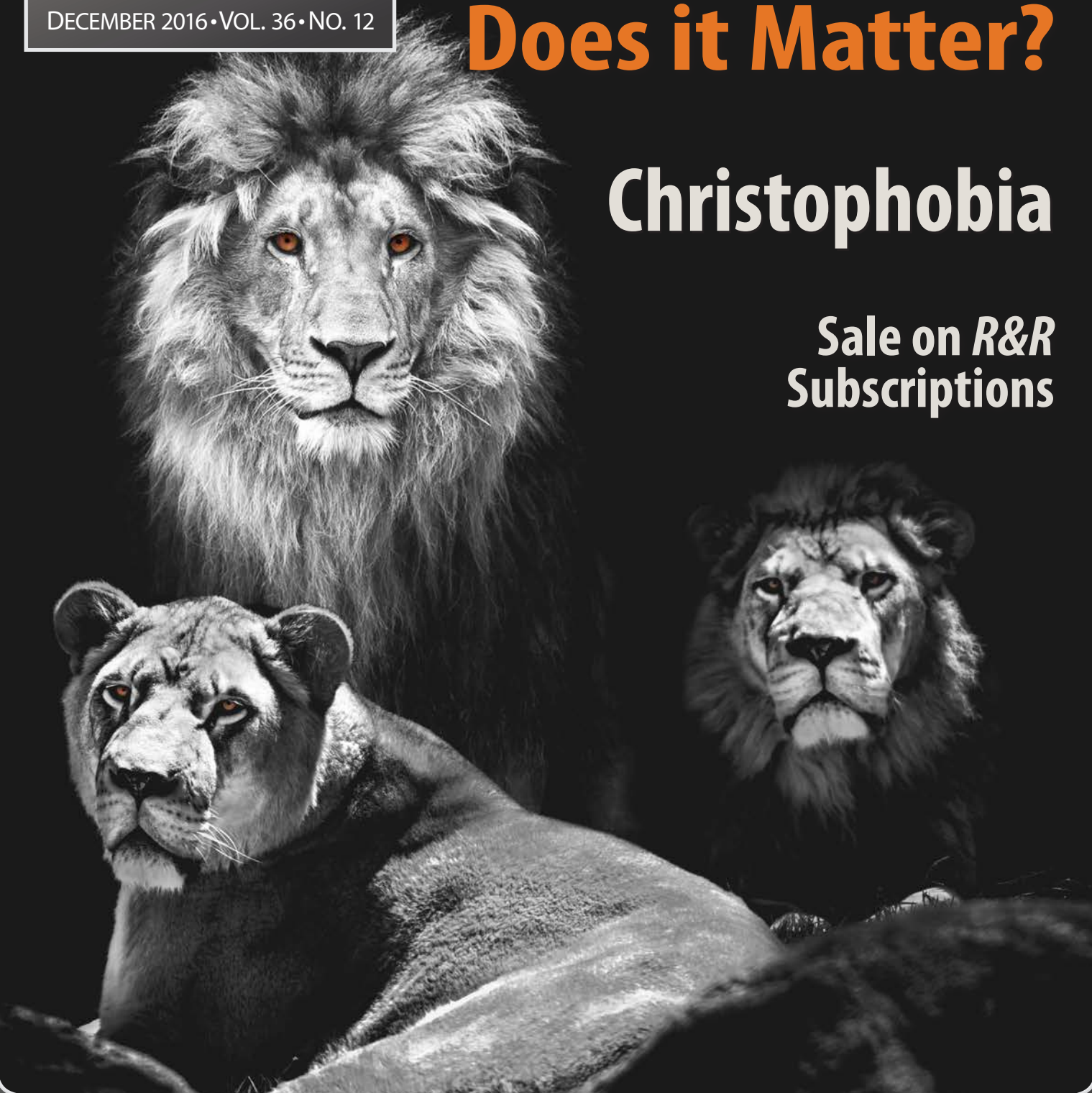
*A Monthly Journal of Christian Evidences*

DECEMBER 2016 • VOL. 36 • NO. 12

# THE DATE OF DANIEL: Does it Matter?

## Christophobia

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# The Date of Daniel: Does it Matter?

Justin Rogers, Ph.D.

*Article In Brief...*



**Concomitant with the critic's incessant attack on the inspiration of the Bible is the lingering attempt by skeptics to discredit the book of Daniel. Yet, the internal attributes of Daniel, with its remarkable predictive prophecies, verify its divine origin.**

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**P**REDICTIVE prophecy is one of the Bible's grandest claims. Either the biblical prophets legitimately predicted the future, or they did not. And if they did not predict the future, then the prophets were either intentionally misrepresenting the future or were hopelessly delusional in thinking they could predict it. With so much at stake, then, it is no surprise that skeptics often target biblical prophecy. If they can prove just one part of one prediction false, then the inspiration of Scripture topples to the ground (cf. 2 Peter 1:21).

But the Bible itself applies an equally strict standard to prophets. The Mosaic Law advises:

But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, "How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?" When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, **if the thing does not happen or come to pass**, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him (Deuteronomy 18:20-22, emp. added).

The Mosaic Law's litmus test for a legitimate prophet was his (or her) ability to predict the future. Now some predictions are generic enough so as to present little problem for the skeptic. In the context of the passage cited above, for example, Moses predicts a coming "prophet

like me" (Deuteronomy 18:15,18). No specific description of this prophet occurs, and no chronological constraints are applied. Thus, we must rely on the New Testament to inform us that Jesus is indeed the prophet in question (Acts 3:22; 7:37). Skeptics would allege the New Testament authors simply re-appropriated these words, which were never intended as a prophecy of Jesus.

Specific predictive prophecies, however, present a far greater problem for the skeptic. This is why the date of Daniel is so hotly contested. The critic alleges that Daniel must fit within the early second century B.C. and not within the time period in which the book places itself: the late sixth century B.C. They argue that this is the case simply because the characters and events represented as belonging to the sixth century are vague and the details allegedly erroneous, while descriptions of the late third and early second century B.C. are specific and accurate. In other words, Daniel claims not merely to assert generic predictions which could find "fulfillment" in any creative rereading. Rather, **with the highest degree of accuracy**, Daniel wrote about imperial successions (Daniel 2,7) and complicated dynastic intermarriages (Daniel 10-11), growing increasingly specific the further he moved from his own day. And he was correct about details that confuse even modern historians. The skeptic alleges: "This just cannot be!"

For this reason, virtually all liberal scholars (and even a few "conservative" ones) place the book of Daniel in the second century B.C. and denigrate every apparent prediction. Ernest Lucas, for example, a conservative, maintains that either a late date (denying predictive prophecy)



or an early date (affirming predictive prophecy) “are consonant with belief in the divine inspiration and authority of the book.”<sup>1</sup> Lucas seems to draw inspiration from John Goldingay, an evangelical scholar who asserts a theological rationale for the second century date: “Dating Daniel in the sixth century, indeed, brings not more glory to God but less. It makes it a less impressive and helpful document. It makes it seem more alien to me in my life of faith, for God does not treat me this way.”<sup>2</sup> Goldingay presupposes that predictive prophecy would be theologically deficient to Daniel’s original audience, because it would not help them “today.” By this logic, all New Testament references to heaven and hell would be theologically deficient to Christians in the first century A.D., or even today.

Although Lucas and Goldingay claim to affirm biblical inspiration, notice what they allow: the author represents himself as being someone other than who he was, as belonging to an age in which he did not live, as claiming revelations that he never received, and predicting events that had already occurred! It is with good reason that E.B. Pusey long ago opened one of his famed lectures by laying out the stakes:

The book of Daniel is especially fitted to be a battlefield between faith and unbelief. It admits no half-measures. It is either divine or an imposture. To write any book under the name of another, and to give it out to be his, is, in any case, a forgery, dishonest in itself, and destructive of all trustworthiness. But the case as to the book of Daniel, if it were not his, would go far beyond even this. The writer, were he not Daniel, must have lied on a most frightful scale, ascribing to God prophecies which were never uttered, and

miracles which are assumed never to have been wrought. In a word, the whole book would be one lie in the Name of God.<sup>3</sup>

So the date of Daniel most certainly matters to people of faith. Did Daniel know the future, or did he merely author history in the guise of a prophet? In this article, we shall sketch the major objections to an early date of Daniel, and offer some possible alternatives, establishing that a position of faith tolerates only a date for Daniel in the sixth century B.C.

## HISTORICAL OBJECTIONS

ONE of the most famous prophecies in Scripture is Daniel’s scheme of empires, interpreted from Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Daniel 2), and repeated in greater detail in the prophet’s own vision (Daniel 7). Since most liberal scholars presuppose the impossibility of accurate prediction, they are forced to squeeze Daniel’s four empires into a tighter window. The traditional view, attested from early Christian times, is that Daniel, living in the late sixth century B.C., prophesied

the coming of the Roman Empire during whose time the Church was established (Daniel 2:44; cf. Luke 20:18). Even those who accept a late date, however, cannot allow the Roman Empire to be the fulfillment of Daniel’s vision. [See the resulting scheme in the chart on p. 136.]<sup>4</sup>

Now it is clear from the book of Daniel itself that the liberal scheme does not work. First, Daniel always combines the Medes and the Persians (5:28; 6:8,12,15). There is no recognition of separate empires within the book. Second, the context makes clear that the third empire (and not the fourth) is Greece: “And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power” (Daniel 8:21-22). The large horn would be none other than Alexander the Great, and the four kingdoms the subsequent divisions of his empire among his four generals (the “Diadochoi”).<sup>5</sup>

**Reason & Revelation** is published monthly by Apologetics Press, Inc. Periodicals postage paid at Montgomery, AL. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to **Reason & Revelation**, 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117; **ISSN:** [1542-0922] **USPS#** 023415.

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Traditional View	Liberal View
Babylonian Empire	Babylonian Empire
Medo-Persian Empire	Median Empire
Greek Empire	Persian Empire
Roman Empire	Greek Empire

Beyond the scheme of empires, according to the skeptics a greater problem confronts the sixth-century interpretation: the closer the narrative gets to the material covering 167-164 B.C., it is alleged, the more reliable it becomes. If the author really lived in the sixth century B.C., he ought to have known the history of his own time better than events 350 years later. Three cases of sixth century Babylonian and Persian history are considered especially problematic. First, Daniel 1:1-2 presupposes a Babylonian siege and deportation the Bible nowhere else describes. Second, it is alleged that Daniel confuses the succession of Babylonian kings. Third, and considered most problematic, Daniel either confuses or invents Darius the Mede.

First, it is true that no other source confirms a Babylonian siege of Jerusalem, followed by a deportation, in the year 605 B.C. (this date corresponds to Jeremiah 25:1, although Daniel and Jeremiah use different dating schemes).<sup>6</sup> But the Babylonian historian Berossus is quoted by Josephus as reporting that during his reign Nebuchadnezzar commanded prisoners of war be taken from “among the Jews, Phoenicians, Syrians and people of Egypt.”<sup>7</sup> The book of Daniel makes clear that “some” of the young nobles were indeed carried away (Daniel 1:3). So some Babylonians had to be among the Jews at some point to carry away **Jewish** prisoners of war.

Nevertheless, we cannot corroborate from secular history a “siege”

of Jerusalem in the year 605 B.C. But such an event is certainly possible. We know Nebuchadnezzar defeated an Egyptian-Assyrian alliance at Carchemish in the year 605 B.C. (Jeremiah 46:2). This most decisive battle took place in Northern Syria, and established Babylonian control over the entire Near East. Since we understand the Levant,<sup>8</sup> including Judah, to be pro-Egyptian during this period (cf. Jeremiah 2:18; Ezekiel 17:15), it makes sense that Nebuchadnezzar would force these “western” territories to capitulate to his command. This would require laying siege to the major capital cities, including Jerusalem. Later in the year 605 B.C., possibly in the midst of his siege of Jerusalem, Nabopolassar, the reigning monarch and father of Nebuchadnezzar, died, forcing him to return to Babylon, leaving the western territories to claim the throne.<sup>9</sup> There is certainly time for a brief Babylonian siege of Jerusalem in 605 B.C., especially when we consider Nebuchadnezzar was in the vicinity.

Second, Daniel allegedly confuses the order of the Babylonian kings. Daniel in fact mentions only two Babylonian kings: Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, making the latter the son of the former (Daniel 5:2,11,18). The problem is that, first, Belshazzar was never actually a “king” of Babylon, and second, he was not even related to Nebuchadnezzar. Neither of these problems, however, creates difficulty for the Bible believer. When one reads the

text carefully, he will notice that Belshazzar offers the honor of “third ruler” in his kingdom, indicating that he is himself second (Daniel 5:7,16, 29). Indeed, we know that Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, spent the last 10 years of his reign in the wilderness of Teima, placing his own son, Belshazzar, on the throne in his absence.<sup>10</sup> Daniel simply reflects historical reality.

As for Belshazzar being the “son” of Nebuchadnezzar, the term “father” in the Bible can mean “predecessor,” and does not necessarily imply a genetic relationship (e.g., Genesis 4:20-21). Further, Archer suggests the possibility that Nabonidus married one of Nebuchadnezzar’s daughters, thereby making the genetic grandfather of his son Nebuchadnezzar (for this use of the term father, see Genesis 28:13; 32:10).<sup>11</sup> We cannot be certain of such an arrangement. In any case, the skeptical position is not as strong as it might at first appear, and perfectly reasonable alternatives can be offered.

Third, Daniel has Darius the Mede as the first Persian king after the Babylonians (6:1), with Cyrus (the actual first Persian king) as his successor (6:28). Further, Darius is called the son of Xerxes (9:1) when in fact Xerxes was the son of Darius I.<sup>12</sup> Liberal scholars have generally abandoned the quest for the historical Darius, and have reached the conclusion that he never existed. H.H. Rowley writes in his widely influential treatment, “The claim of the book of Daniel to be a work of

history, written by a well-informed contemporary, is shattered beyond repair by this fiction of Darius the Mede.”<sup>13</sup>

While no clear solution to Daniel’s Darius has presented itself, there are some plausible alternatives to the liberal position. It is possible that Darius is an alternative name for a figure we already know. We know that rulers of diverse ethnic groups commonly took “throne names” to appeal to their citizens (e.g., 1 Chronicles 5:26). The title of “king” was not necessarily reserved for the supreme monarch in the ancient Near East, and a number of lesser rulers could have been allowed to hold the title.<sup>14</sup> So the general who actually overtook Babylon, Gubaru (or Ugbaru), may well be Daniel’s Darius.<sup>15</sup>

A different opinion is bolstered by the fact that Cyrus, the first king of the Persian empire, was age 62 when he began to reign, exactly as Daniel’s Darius (Daniel 5:31). Thus some wish to argue Cyrus “the Great” and Darius were one and the same. If we read the Aramaic *waw* in Daniel 6:28 adverbially, then it is possible to equate the two figures: “And this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, **even** in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.” If this suggestion is correct, then these two names could be gentilic tags—Darius “the Mede” indicating his presentation of himself to the Medes, and Cyrus “the Persian,” his presentation to the Persians. Since Cyrus is known to have been from the Median territories himself, Daniel generally presents him in the early days of his reign from the region of his origins.

As for the assertion that the father of Darius was Xerxes (Daniel 9:1), if Daniel’s Darius is a lesser ruler of the Persians, such as Gubaru, then Daniel preserves a name

otherwise unknown. If, however, Darius and Cyrus are the same person, the Hebrew Ahasuerus (Daniel 9:1) may well represent the name of Cyrus’ grandfather, Astyages, from whom the former seized power (this reasoning may lie behind Josephus’ confused account in *Antiquities* 10.248). He just so happens to have been “a Mede by descent,” and the last king of the Median Empire. Whatever possible solution, the identity of Darius the Mede is most difficult. While we believe a plausible solution can be offered, it is essential to recognize humbly the lack of evidence supplied from comparative history.<sup>16</sup>

### LINGUISTIC OBJECTIONS

**O**VER 100 years ago, S.R. Driver wrote in his widely-circulated *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, “The verdict of the language of Daniel is thus clear. The *Persian* words presuppose a period after the Persian empire had been well established: the Greek words *demand*, the Hebrew *supports* and the Aramaic *permits* a date *after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great* (B.C. 332).”<sup>17</sup> Virtually no scholar would offer an unqualified endorsement of Driver’s “verdict” today. Still, the linguistic objections remain strongly asserted among the critics.

First, the book is written in two languages. It begins in Hebrew, and then switches in the middle of 2:4 to Aramaic, which continues uninterrupted through the end of chapter 7. Then with 8:1 the Hebrew resumes to the end of the book. Scholars once assumed that the book needed to be written partially in Aramaic because it belonged to a time when Hebrew was no longer understood among the common people. Since the

discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, such a position is no longer tenable.

While the book utilizes an admittedly strange literary feature, the Hebrew-Aramaic-Hebrew structure does not require a late date. More recent discoveries of so-called “Imperial” Aramaic texts prove that the Aramaic of Daniel actually fits more closely the Aramaic of the fifth century B.C. than the much later Aramaic texts preserved among the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>18</sup> The Dead Sea Scrolls have also assisted us in determining that the Hebrew sections of Daniel are far closer to the Hebrew of the biblical prophets than that of the later Hebrew compositions preserved among the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>19</sup> The Hebrew and Aramaic sections of Daniel are certainly at home in the late sixth century.

More critical attention has been given to the Persian and Greek loanwords used in the book. Driver believed the Persian words “presuppose” a later date, but in fact this is not true. Kenneth Kitchen found that “the Persian words in Daniel are specifically, *Old Persian* words.”<sup>20</sup> Since the transition to the Middle Persian dialect occurs around 300 B.C., we would expect an author in the second century to use a much different form of the Persian language. In addition, about half of the 20 or so Persian terms Driver isolated in Daniel are administrative, exactly the kind of language we would expect from an officer of the Persian court! The Persian terms actually serve to support a sixth century date for Daniel.

The Greek words are more problematic, at least on the surface. If Daniel were written in the sixth century, it is alleged, then he should not have known **any** Greek words at all, since he would have had no occasion to learn Greek. An early second

(cont. on p. 141)





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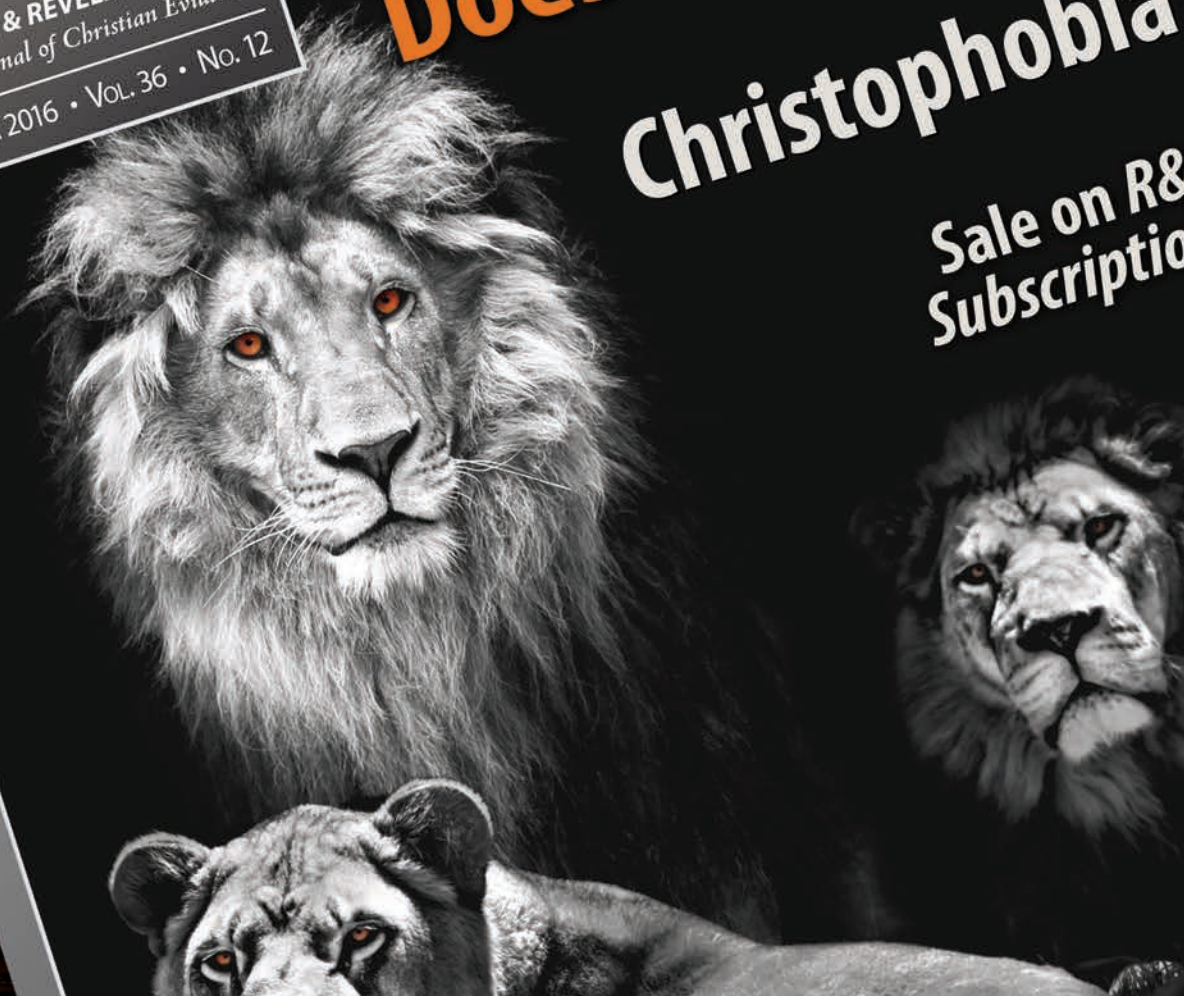
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**Q:** Are Christians “homophobic”?

**A:** The PC crowd regularly and incessantly levels charges of “phobia” against all those who disagree with them on any number of moral issues.<sup>1</sup> If you believe the Bible teaches that homosexuality is sinful, you are declared “homophobic” or “lesbophobic”; if you believe Islam is a false religion that endangers the American way of life, you are deemed “Islamophobic”; if you are concerned about the moral and spiritual impact on the nation of those who enter America illegally, you are labeled “xenophobic”; if you believe in the God of the Bible and consider atheism to be false, you are “atheophobic”; if you believe transgenderism is a mental illness, you are demeaned as “transphobic”; and the list goes on.

These charges are unfounded, inaccurate, and untrue. True Christians are not **irrationally afraid** of such things. Rather, they have given considered analysis to each issue, including a careful assessment of what the Bible teaches (and, generally, what once characterized American civilization), and concluded that these behaviors are immoral and harmful to society. Neither do they fear murderers, thieves, or fornicators. Rather they recognize such behaviors as sinful in God’s sight, unhealthy and detrimental to civil society, and actions that will ultimately cost the practitioner his soul for all eternity (Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8). True Christians love such people and experience genuine sorrow over their self-destructive condition (Matthew 5:44; 23:37; Ezekiel 18:32).

Yet, error is always inconsistent, hypocritical, and actually guilty of the malady it decries. The same people who fill the airways with their cries of “intolerance!” and “judgmental!” are the very ones who are extremely intolerant, judgmental, and fearful (phobic) of anything or anyone who believes in the Bible and Chris-

tianity. Indeed, they are **Christophobic**—irrationally afraid of and bitterly opposed to the precepts of Christ and the biblical principles on which America was founded.

Satan has always been “slick” in his ability to divert attention away from spiritual reality and generate opposition against the truth—like the Wizard of Oz who said, “Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain.”<sup>2</sup> Sinful, wicked behaviors as defined by Deity are damaging to people physically and spiritually. They cannot be justified or dismissed as trivial simply because those who champion them mischaracterize the righteous as “phobic” or “hateful.” Those who speak against moral, godly principles—and those who defend them—are truly guilty of “hate speech.”

“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness” (Isaiah 5:20). “But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, **speak evil of the things they do not understand**, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Peter 2:12-13).

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness..., evil-mindedness; they are...**hatters of God...**, inventors of evil things..., who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also **approve of those who practice them** (Romans 1:28-32).

**Dave Miller**

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Tommy Christopher (2016), “Here’s the Full Context of Hillary Clinton’s ‘Basket of Deplorables’ Remark About Trump Supporters,” *Mediaite*, September 10, <https://goo.gl/KivljF>.

<sup>2</sup> The Wizard of Oz (1939), “Quotes,” <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0032138/quotes>.



century author, by contrast, would be well-acquainted with Greek. But again, this argument is based on faulty reasoning. First, it has been conclusively demonstrated that the Levant had contact with the Greek peoples well before the late sixth century B.C.<sup>21</sup>

Second, there are only **three Greek words** in question, and all three refer to musical instruments (3:5,7,10,15: *qathrōs*, קִתְרוֹס = *kithara*, κιθάρα; *p'santhērîn*, פְּסַנְתְּרִין = *psaltērion*, ψαλτήριον; *sūmpōnyāh*, סוּמְפוֹנְיָה = *sumphōnia*, συμφωνία). As Archer points out, the names of musical instruments generally remain fixed in the source language for centuries (e.g., piano, viola).<sup>22</sup> Even though these terms are not attested until Plato (429-347 B.C.), it is likely the instruments were in existence long before. Even Collins, who is a major proponent of a second century date, acknowledges that “the evidence for Greek influence on Daniel is too slight to prove anything,” and “The date of the tales in Daniel must be established on other grounds.”<sup>23</sup>

Other than foreign loanwords in Daniel, the use of the term “Chaldean” has received a great deal of attention. The term in the Old Testament is generally used as a rough equivalent to “Babylonian” (e.g., Isaiah 43:14; Habakkuk 1:6). But Daniel uses the term in reference to a class of “wise men” (Daniel 2:2,4,5,10; 4:7; 5:7,11). It is alleged that Daniel, writing long after Greek culture and language had taken hold in Palestine, has been influenced by the Greek use of the term “astrologer.”

First, let us note that Daniel is not ignorant of the gentilic use of the term in the Old Testament (Daniel 1:4; 5:30; 9:1). Second, as Robert Dick Wilson argued long ago, Daniel’s “Chaldean” combines the

Aramaic terms *Kasdi* (the people of Chaldea) and *Kaldi* (astrologers), an understandable phonetic shift for a sixth century author living in Babylon, but a puzzling mistake for a second century author living in Palestine.<sup>24</sup> In fact, Daniel’s usage may well be closer to the original **Babylonian** *Galdu* than the rest of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>25</sup> This objection, when properly understood from its linguistic environment, actually helps to support a date in the late sixth century B.C.

### CANONICAL OBJECTIONS

**T**HE final objection to the reliability of Daniel is its placement in the Hebrew Bible. The English Old Testament, following the Latin Vulgate, places Daniel fourth in the order of Major Prophets. But in the Hebrew Bible, Daniel is not included in the Prophets, but rather in the Writings. The critics allege this to be proof of a late date. Daniel was composed, it is suggested, **after** the canon of Hebrew Prophets had been closed.<sup>26</sup>

It is true that from an early time, the Jews divided the Hebrew Bible into three parts: the Law (*Torah*), the Prophets (*Nevi'im*) and the Writings (*Kethuvim*), although not always using these exact terms.<sup>27</sup> But we have no clear statement on exactly which books were included in the latter two divisions until late in the first century A.D. Josephus, our earliest author to comment on the individual books in the Hebrew canon, seems to include Daniel among the Prophets.

Josephus states that the Jews accept only 22 sacred books (which are equivalent to our 39 Old Testament books). He writes, “Five of these are the books of Moses,” and “the prophets after Moses wrote the history of what took place in

their own times in thirteen books; the remaining four books contain hymns to God and instructions for people on life” (*Against Apion*, 1.38-40).<sup>28</sup> John M.G. Barclay suggests in his notes on the passage cited above, “it is most likely that Josephus means: Joshua, Judges + Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah + Lamentations, Ezekiel, the 12 [Minor Prophets], Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah (= Esdras), Daniel, Job, and Esther.”<sup>29</sup> It is virtually certain that Josephus includes Daniel among the 13 Prophets, and not among the four books of the “Writings.” The canonical order of the Christian Bible actually appears in the case of Daniel to preserve an older tradition than the (now) traditional Hebrew Bible.

In addition to the evidence Josephus provides as to the canonical placement of Daniel, there can be no question that both the Dead Sea sectarians and Josephus regard Daniel to be a legitimate prophet (e.g., 4Q174; *Antiquities* 10.188,249,268). Daniel is in fact Josephus’ primary source of history in book 10 of his *Antiquities*, and indeed many Jewish authors at the time believed Daniel to have predicted the rise of the Roman empire (e.g., 2 Baruch 39; 4 Ezra 11-12; and Josephus himself, *Antiquities* 10.276). Jesus’ own prediction of the fall of Jerusalem is explicitly described as the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophetic announcement from Daniel 9 (Matthew 24:15). Were all these ancient Jewish figures hopelessly deceived by Daniel’s phony claims of prophetic power? Could Jesus have been wrong about Daniel’s ability to predict the future?

The critic might object that we have yet to explain how Daniel was transferred from the Prophets to the Writings in the Jewish canon.

The answer is really quite simple: Daniel was not a prophet in the traditional sense. First, he is not **called** a prophet in the book. In fact, the only time the word “prophet” is used in Daniel, it describes the biblical prophet Jeremiah (9:2,24). Second, Daniel issues no prophetic sermons, nor does he work among the Jewish people. He is an inspired seer who receives visions of the future, and assists foreign monarchs. He shares more in common with Joseph than with any of the Scriptural Prophets. Daniel’s unique qualities apparently led the ultra-conservative Jewish rabbis to exclude him from the Prophets since he did not, like the other Prophets, serve the people of God.

### THE POSITIVE EVIDENCE

**T**HOSE who presuppose Daniel’s inability to predict the future assume a second century date without grasping the considerable objections to their view. First, even the most ardent critic must acknowledge the author’s tremendous command of sixth-century historical detail. Even though some questions, such as the identity of Darius the Mede, remain difficult, other matters of sixth century history could not have been easily understood by an author living 350 years later. The critic Robert Pfeiffer, for example, remarks:

We shall presumably never know how our author learned that the new Babylon was the creation of Nebuchadnezzar (4:30), as the excavations have proved...and that Belshazzar, mentioned only in Babylonian records, in Daniel, and in Bar[uch] 1:11, which is based on Daniel, was functioning as king when Cyrus took Babylon in 538 (chap. 5).<sup>30</sup>

The answer to Pfeiffer’s conundrum is simple: Daniel was there! He lived through the events he described, just as the book claims.

Second, although the critics make much of Daniel’s absence from the list of Jewish heroes in the *Wisdom* of Jesus Ben Sirah 44-50, this objection does not hold up. Ben Sirah is no more attempting a comprehensive list of faithful Israelites than is Hebrews 11. Daniel is excluded to be sure, but so are Job, Ezra, and several other faithful Israelites. In any case, this is an argument from silence, which simply cannot be sustained without positive evidence to substantiate it.

The fact is that other Intertestamental Period authors do mention Daniel as an honorable hero. The book of 1 Maccabees features Mattathias encouraging his sons to emulate the example of Daniel (2:59-60). Daniel is a popular character also at Qumran, with fragments of two manuscripts of the book dating to the second century B.C.<sup>31</sup> In total, eight manuscripts of Daniel have turned up among the Dead Sea Scrolls. In addition, some Pseudo-Daniel compositions have emerged from authors who wished to imitate Daniel,<sup>32</sup> along with imaginary compositions partially based on Daniel.<sup>33</sup> All of this evidence, combined with the New Testament references to Daniel, points to the conclusion that Daniel was accepted as a legitimate prophet of God among the Jewish people.

### CONCLUSION

**S**O violent are the critical attacks on the book of Daniel that Josh McDowell chose to devote the third volume of his *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* series exclusively to the defense of Daniel.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, the level of specificity with which

Daniel predicts the future is troubling for the critic. This is why the ardent opponent of Christianity, the Greek philosopher Porphyry, already alleged in the third century A.D. that the book of Daniel was a forgery of the Maccabean Age (reported in Jerome’s *Commentary on Daniel*).<sup>35</sup> The skeptical position has advanced little past Porphyry’s original pronouncement.

The Bible believer can appreciate the skeptic’s predicament. If the skeptic allows just one predictive prophecy to stand, then the Bible must be divine. So unbelievers must work feverishly to demolish the Bible’s reliability. They scratch and claw away at the data, insisting that everything in the Bible requires proof outside the Bible. They build mountainous theories on historical silence and critical presupposition. And they force believers to feel inadequate if they cannot discredit every skeptical assertion.

Yet the evidence forces the critic to a frightening conclusion: Daniel knows too much about the sixth century B.C. to be writing 350 years after the event, but he knows too much about late third and early second century B.C. to be writing 350 years before the event. So either the author was one of the most industrious historians who has ever lived, researching Babylonian and Persian records written in languages he most likely could not have read, and located in places almost certainly inaccessible, or he was a prophet of God, borne along by the Holy Spirit as Scripture indicates. There can be no compromise. “Daniel” was either a brilliantly researched, pseudonymous liar, or he was the great prophet Jewish and Christian tradition for over two millennia have claimed him to be. Let the reader decide.



## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Ernest C. Lucas (2002), *Daniel*, ed. David Baker and Gordon Wenham (Leicester/Downers Grove, IL: Apollos/IVP), p. 312.
- <sup>2</sup> John E. Goldingay (1977), "The Book of Daniel: Three Issues," *Themelios*, 2:49.
- <sup>3</sup> E.B. Pusey (1885), *Daniel the Prophet: Nine Lectures, Delivered in the Divinity School of the University of Oxford* (New York: Oxford), p. 75.
- <sup>4</sup> John H. Walton (1994), *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), revised edition, p. 105.
- <sup>5</sup> The word means "successors" and refers to the rival generals of Alexander the Great who fought for control over his empire after his death in 323 B.C.
- <sup>6</sup> See Robert Dick Wilson (1917), *Studies in the Book of Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1972 reprint), 1:43-59.
- <sup>7</sup> *Antiquities* 10.219-224; *Against Apion* 1.133-139.
- <sup>8</sup> The term "Levant" conventionally refers to the region of Syria-Palestine.
- <sup>9</sup> See the so-called "Jerusalem Chronicle," <http://www.livius.org/sources/content/mesopotamian-chronicles-content/abc-5-jerusalem-chronicle/?>.
- <sup>10</sup> *Nabonidus Chronicle*, 2.5ff., [http://www.livius.org/cgcm/chronicles/abc7/abc7\\_nabonidus3.html](http://www.livius.org/cgcm/chronicles/abc7/abc7_nabonidus3.html).
- <sup>11</sup> Gleason L. Archer, Jr. (1994), *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago, IL: Moody), p. 426.
- <sup>12</sup> See the chronology of Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein (1942), *Babylonian Chronology*, 626 B.C.-A.D. 45: *Oriental Institute Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* 24 (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press), p. 1956.
- <sup>13</sup> H.H. Rowley (1935), *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel: A Historical Study of Contemporary Theories* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1964 reprint), p. 59.
- <sup>14</sup> See Archer, 1994, pp. 425-430.
- <sup>15</sup> John C. Whitcomb Jr. (1959), *Darius the Mede* (Grand Rapids: Baker); Klaus Koch (1995), *Die Reiche der Welt und der kommende Menschensohn: Studien*

zum *Danielbuch*, ed. Martin Rösel (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag), pp. 125-139.

- <sup>16</sup> **NOTE:** A legitimate distinction exists between a contradiction on the one hand, and simply a lack of evidence to decide a question on the other. Cf. Kyle Butt (2010), "Responding to the Skeptic's Attack Against Nazareth," Apologetics Press, <http://apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=13&article=3579&topic=82>.
- <sup>17</sup> S.R. Driver (1897), *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), p. 508, italics in orig.
- <sup>18</sup> Edwin M. Yamauchi (1967), *Greece and Babylon: Early Contacts Between the Aegean and the Near East* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker); Zdravko Stefanovic (1992), *The Aramaic of Daniel in the Light of Old Aramaic* (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 129).
- <sup>19</sup> Cf. R.K. Harrison (1979), *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), p. 1125; Gleason L. Archer Jr. (1985), *Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), pp. 23-24.
- <sup>20</sup> Kenneth A. Kitchen (1970), "The Aramaic of Daniel," in *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel* (London: Tyndale), p. 43, italics in orig.
- <sup>21</sup> Edwin M. Yamauchi (1981), "Daniel and Contacts Between the Aegean and the Near East Before Alexander,"

*Evangelical Quarterly*, 53:37-47.

- <sup>22</sup> Archer, 1994, p. 431.
- <sup>23</sup> John J. Collins (1993), *Daniel* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress), p. 20.
- <sup>24</sup> 1:338-339.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:326-366.
- <sup>26</sup> Driver, pp. 497-98.
- <sup>27</sup> E.g., 4Q397 [MMT] frgs 14-21; Prologue to the Greek translation of Ben Sirah; Luke 24:44.
- <sup>28</sup> John M.G. Barclay, trans. (2007), *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary. Volume 10: Against Apion* (Leiden: Brill), pp. 29-30.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- <sup>30</sup> Robert H. Pfeiffer (1952), *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: Black), pp. 758-759.
- <sup>31</sup> 4QDan<sup>c</sup> [4Q114] 4QDan<sup>c</sup> [4Q116].
- <sup>32</sup> Ps-Dan<sup>a-b</sup> [4Q243-44]; Ps-Dan<sup>c</sup> [4Q245].
- <sup>33</sup> The "Prayer of Nabonidus" [4Q242]; "Four Kingdoms" [4Q552-53].
- <sup>34</sup> Josh McDowell (1979), *Daniel in the Critics' Den: Historical Evidence for the Authenticity of the Book of Daniel* (San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ).
- <sup>35</sup> Gleason Archer, Jr., trans. (1958), *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Baker), [www.tertulian.org/fathers/jerome\\_daniel\\_02\\_text.htm](http://www.tertulian.org/fathers/jerome_daniel_02_text.htm).

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## NOTE FROM

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